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3.4(c) - 1949 Act

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14 August 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Intelligence Briefing of Mr. Truman by the Director of Central Intelligence at Independence, Tuesday, 12 August 1958

1. The Director of Central Intelligence briefed Mr. Truman in the latter's private office in the Truman Library, Independence, Missouri, from 4:50 to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 August 1958. The Director was

3.4(c) - 1949 Act accompanied by [REDACTED] No other persons were present. This was the second intelligence briefing of Mr. Truman, the first having been

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2. Before beginning the intelligence briefing the Director said that he had brought a draft of the speech which the President planned to make at the UN General Assembly on Wednesday. The great importance which the President attached to the speech as a major contribution to the solution of Mid-Eastern problems was emphasized. The Director indicated that the speech was still being worked on and that the section dealing with Jordan was to be expanded [REDACTED] It was pointed out that the speech drew attention to the similarity between the present crisis and critical periods during Mr. Truman's administration and that it was the President's wish to insert Mr. Truman's name into the

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speech in connection with our government's response to these earlier crises.

3. Mr. Truman expressed deep appreciation for the consideration shown him by the President and said that he was touched and honored. He was glad to know that the President himself would go to New York to deliver the address and signified his approval with emphatic gestures. The UN was the right place for the discussion of the Mid-Eastern problem and he was in complete agreement with the President in the President's insistence on this principle throughout the recent correspondence with Mr. Khrushchev.

4. In his intelligence briefing the Director followed the outline, copy attached, which he had drawn up beforehand to bring Mr. Truman up to date from the briefing given him on 30 July. The briefing was referred to as background for Mr. Truman's use in following the UN General Assembly session.

5. In response to the Director's review of the Soviet proposals for a summit conference of five heads of government, including Mr. Nehru, Mr. Truman indicated his own negative reaction to the Soviet predilection for Big-Power settlement of small-power problems. He stressed the importance of the UN as the organization established to protect the small powers from just this kind of treatment. Mr. Truman recalled the Congress of Vienna as an outmoded form for the settlement of international problems.

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6. The Director made it clear that Khrushchev's demand for a meeting of the General Assembly on the Mid-East problem was a return to earlier resolutions, in one of which the U.S. itself had proposed to refer the Mid-Eastern problem to the General Assembly. Khrushchev's shift in tactics following the visit to Peiping did not mean an abandonment of the request for a summit conference. The Director developed the significance of Khrushchev's visit to Peiping in the context of a Sino-Soviet desire for a summit conference in which the Chinese Communists would have an insistent voice. When the Director described the Chinese Communist military and political pressure on the Chinese Nationalist position in the Taiwan Strait area, as part of the coordinated moves by the Sino-Soviet bloc against the West, Mr. Truman responded with concern.

7. Mr. Truman immediately asked about the situation in Korea and on being told that the Chinese Communists had been withdrawing troops from North Korea he said that he had wondered if the pressure against Formosa might be a ruse or distraction to cover a revival of pressure in Korea. He went on to express his doubts and suspicions concerning the Chinese Communists and remarked on the difficulties which an American has in understanding the Chinese. He sometimes thought he should have permitted General MacArthur to go after them. Mr. Truman indicated his acute consciousness of the continuing danger to us arising out of the Chinese Communist threat in the Far East. As before, on the occasion of his briefing on 30 July, he alluded to his interest in

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Sino-Soviet relations, adding this time that he was convinced the Russians were afraid of the Chinese.

8. In the course of briefing on the principal developments in each of the Middle Eastern countries, and the Moslem North African states, the Director stressed the difficulty of the British position in Jordan and elaborated on the nexus of problems arising out of Jordan's plight. Mr. Truman observed that the present Jordan did not have the economic resources to maintain an independent existence. Apropos of a reference to Deputy Undersecretary Murphy's talks with Nasir, Mr. Truman said that he would place no more trust in Nasir than he would in a Communist.

9. During the concluding discussion of the Middle East Mr. Truman tapped Afghanistan on the world globe by his desk and expressed the opinion that Afghanistan was lost now that the Soviet Union dominates her economically. The Director quickly qualified Mr. Truman's factual references and took issue with the proposition that Afghanistan was lost. There was a general exchange of views in which Mr. Truman stressed the reliance which we could always place in the friendship of Pakistan and Turkey and in which the Director returned to the internal problems of the governments of Iran and the Sudan in relation to their desire to maintain a pro-Western position.

10. Finally Mr. Truman asked what would come of all this; how could this difficult and dangerous situation end? What could we do to bring this area into an age of sanity?

11. In response to Mr. Truman's question the Director turned to the draft of the President's speech as containing proposed answers and


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offered it to him to read should he so desire. Inasmuch as the speech was still undergoing revision, Mr. Truman decided that he would wait to read it in its final form as given by the President and reported in the press. He signified a willingness, however, to talk about any proposals contained in the speech and there followed a discussion of its economic proposal. Mr. Truman said he felt sure he would be in complete agreement with all the proposals but he particularly welcomed an effort to reach an economic solution, the economic approach being in his opinion the basic one for dealing with problems in the area. He reiterated a belief which he had expressed earlier that the local revenues from oil could go a long way to solve Arab problems if only properly used by the Arab governments. As for Arab nationalism, he said we have every reason to foster it, but not, he added, in the form of a political unity imposed by Egypt. He did not believe political unity was what the Arabs truly desired or really needed and this they would see for themselves if only they would sit down calmly and apply their extraordinary resources to their mutual problems.

12. At the end of the briefing, Mr. Truman repeated his expressions of gratitude and of desire to be as cooperative and helpful as it was possible for "a Missouri mule" to be.

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Deputy Assistant Director
Current Intelligence

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